gramme. The selection of various systems including the interim engines have been would be made by choosing the best possible option from the ones available.

Regarding the observations in the news item about association of French Industry in the Programme, it would be recalled that, as mentioned in past, interaction was in hand with industries in various countries including France.

As far as other observations in the subject 'News item' are concerned, it is stated that the LCA programme is being executed at the highest priority by utilising all available resources in the best possible manner so that the Programme is completed expeditiously in the most cost-effective manner.

Monitoring of the MBT and LCA Projects

3959. SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of progress made in the Main Battle Tank and the Light Combat Aircraft Projects of the Defence Research and Development Organi ation; and

(b) whether a monitoring of these projects is being done by competent authorities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) A number of prototypes of MBT-ARJUN have so far been fabricated and are under development trials. These are being utilised for technical evaluation of different sub-system.

In respect of the LCA, the following progress has been achieved:

(i) Feasibility study is completed.

(ii) All Staff Requirements are finalised.

(iii) Interim Power plant is identified and is being procured.

(iv) Project Definition Phase (PDP) is now on and already has made considerable progress.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Induction of the French in Light Combat Aircraft Project

3960. SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE:

SHRI K. MOHANAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the entry of the French into the Light Combat Aircraft project is being viewed with grave concern by those who are connected with the project right from the beginning;

(b) whether this entry would delay the time-frame of 1991 for the prototype and 1994 for the first aircraft; and

(c) whether induction of the French would have material benefit and effect qualitative changes in the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) The Aeronautical Development Agency, a dedicated management organisation for the LCA, is progressing the programme along the most optimum route to realise the programme objectives within the time target. All decisions, including the one on availing assistance from abroad, are taken based on techno-economic considerations, including future likely benefits and ensuring compliance with the operational requirements. Decisions on acquiring technologies are taken only on the basis of their absorption and assimilation in the laboratories and also on their future use in India's defence programme.